



CITY OF ABSECON
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**JANUARY 29, 2009
BUDGET MEETING
MINUTES**

FLAG SALUTE

ROLL CALL: Marczyk, Green, Norris, Falivene, Vizthum, Gorman, Caterson

Absent: Mayor Elco

Also Present: City Administrator, Terry Dolan; CFO, Jessica Thompson & Carie Crone, City Clerk

PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT ON THE SUNSHINE LAW – Lynn

NOTIFICATION THAT THIS MEETING IS ELECTRONICALLY RECORDED – Lynn

Lynn - asked if anyone had suggestions after looking over the budget and seeing what we could cut.

Bobbie – knows the concerns of residents of having the second trash pick-up, but it's one area we should consider cutting the \$26-27,000.

Fred – was against it last year but this year with our backs against the wall, he agrees.

Joe – agrees we could cut it to one.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Jerry – Joe looked at the overall dept. and needs he wanted in the budget this year. After discussions, he understands we will be going through his request and then bringing it back to him and that he won't get everything he wants. We asked him to go back and prioritize his list and bring it back to us and then we will go over it. A couple things need to be addressed on that side this year. The purchase of two new vehicles has been kept up every year and we should be able to keep that, but a lot of the other things he is requesting won't be able to be met.

Fred – they have 3 police cars, police car 2, car 8 and a suburban that are totally down and will be trashed soon. He thinks we will definitely need to buy two.

Terry – they picked up an additional car through drug forfeiture, so we have that. They also got a vehicle donated from the ambulance squad.

Fred – we discussed new firearms – we bought weapons the past two years, but he will be checking the dates of purchases so that number should change in the request. There are some things that we definitely have to keep in the budget.

Jim – an inspection is done by the Attorney General's office and they may give requirements and then we will have to see what is needed. We plan on meeting Tuesday after the Public Safety meeting. There is still a car in the fleet that we bought last year that is not equipped yet.

Jerry – the two-car rotation is enough to keep the fleet going. He thinks Joe was trying to limit the cars to one officer use instead of two using one car and try to get us to a program where they each eventually will have their own car and is responsible to maintain it.

Lynn – suggests the committee advises the chief just like Terry told all the dept. heads, that we're looking at the 2008 budget and not the 2009 requests.

Fred – we discussed a hiring freeze. An officer is leaving in June but will be on terminal leave for a long while and he can't be replaced until he is off the books. The other officer is leaving in April but only has 3 weeks terminal leave.

Jerry – discussed the idea of class 2 officers, which would be part-time and have all the same capabilities of a regular officer with the exception of going to domestic violence calls and certain other calls. They can carry a gun, issue tickets and make arrests. No health benefits would be given and the pay range is in the \$18/hour range. They could do court metal detector monitoring, concert in the parks, they could take walk in complaints and use them for the less intense work now and groom them for potential regular officers.

Charlie – he's in favor of purchasing 2 new cars this year and it looks like I am in the minority about the twice trash pick up. He knows it's a tough economy but he thinks we should keep it.

Jerry – the chief felt he could substantially reduce overtime if court was held in the day.

Lynn – the chief suggested it could start late afternoon and then it would run into the next shift, covering two shifts.

Terry – also spoke to the chief and he Terry believes it would be cost effective. If it started at 2 p.m., it would run through the next shift and not require as much overtime. The Judge said that it is the city's call and also spoke to the Mayor and he is in support of it.

Charlie – we tried this a few years ago and received slack from the court office.

Joe – remembers discussing this a few years ago and agrees we should look into it again. As a courtesy to the Judge, we should let him know to make sure there is no other conflict. To the trash pick up, trying it for one year can't hurt. We can always revisit in 1/10.

LIBRARY

Lynn – discussed the letter from 11/08 regarding an amendment to NJ Statute 40:54-8 concerning the library tax. She then explained how the fee for the municipalities is figured out. This law has not been looked at in 64 years. Our contribution is \$330,000 this year and we have been paying them for years. There is \$4,900 budgeted for books and publications and her idea is to ask them to take this out of what we have to pay them. Another suggestion was to see if they could help out with ABTV.

Jim – I thought of that too as well as the Historical Society. Thinks we could defer the payment until we can see what is going on.

Terry – checked with auditors regarding deferment and was told we couldn't do it.

Jim – researched and found that other towns are doing it so maybe we could look into it more.

Lynn – another large area in the budget is Professional Association Dues across all departments. Other towns are asking people to take unpaid furloughs and people are being laid off. Feels we should have the employees pay their own memberships if they want to join something. We have not cut any jobs or salaries and would like to look into this more.

Council – a suggestion was no salary increases for Council in 2009 and possibly a 10% cut.

Lynn – discussed what happens with unpaid taxes and when the money could be used when it is paid. She would like to find out about what is happening with changing this law.

Terry – explained discussions he’s had with department heads. He told them to go back to the 2008 budget and cut it. One budget was cut \$11,000 from the purchase of a computer program.

Fred – asked Jessica to check on the gasoline costs for the ambulance squad. Will be meeting with Rick on Monday and will come back with that information at our council meeting.

Terry – put the ambulance squad on notice that until he receives their financial reports, a budget will not be brought to council.

Glenn Hayden made a statement from the audience.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn meeting – Councilman Norris – second – Councilman Falivene
All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Carie A. Crone, Clerk

Approved: _____